

Processing Trauma: The Media Art of Daniel Reeves
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Obsessive Becoming
by Daniel Reeves
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The Hand That Holds Up All This Falling: The Works of Daniel Reeves
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Daniel Reeves, an expatriate American currently residing in Scotland and France, is best-known in the United States for his contributions over the last two decades to the evolution of the personal, poetic, experimental video documentary with signature pieces such as *Smothering Dreams* (1981), *Sabda* (1984), *Sombra A Sombra* (1988), *Ganapati: Spirit of the Bush* (1986), and his epic masterwork, *Obsessive Becoming* (1995). (1) Historically, these works contributed to the legitimization of video as an art form, and helped to chart the genre of a personal documentary that melded subjectivity with public histories and political agenda. Reeves's work also carved out a space for a magical realist documentary practice distinct from the postmodern video counterhistories of the 1980s and early 1990s. (2)

Since the production of *Smothering Dreams*—a visceral reenactment and psychic restaging of his brutal ambush experiences during the Vietnam War—Reeves has produced a stunning and evocative range of work in video, installation, photography and performance. However, his mystical and subjectively encoded single-channel work has somewhat eclipsed his prolific work in other media, such as installation and photography (to be discussed later), which suggest more public territories in their disposition and reception.

Incorporating multiple media formations and constructions, these various projects navigate a complex terrain between the political nightmares of war, the necessity of spiritual renewal and the urgency of appropriating new technologies to create new collective rituals. All of the work suggests the imperative to constantly invent new formal languages for visual/psychic exploration, deploying technology not as a fetish but as an exorcism to recover fractured memories, warped political sensibilities and misplaced collectivities. The artist transforms into the shaman. Reeves's strategy merges art-making as a spiritual practice with art-reception as a historiographic methodology, an embodiment and inscription of history upon both the body and the eye.

Both the single-channel and installation/multi-media works share an obsession with reworking trauma (Vietnam, the Spanish Civil War, child abuse, family violence, the Gulf War, nuclear

war, environmental destruction of plants and animals) through a reclamation of the curative powers latent in the reprocessed image. In trauma, the image emerges as the psychic pivot point, the place where precise repetition elides memory and prevents the moving forward that is inscribed in a narrativizing history. (3) The traumatic event, larger than life because it annihilates life and summons death, continually returns and cannot be controlled or tamed or extinguished; it can only be integrated within a historically dialogic practice. In the content of Reeves's work, trauma is engraved with death, figured in wars, environmental destruction, psychic deaths. According to literary theorist Cathy Caruth, "To be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event." (4) As cultural theorist Stuart Hall has observed in his analysis of Frantz Fanon's theorization of the inscription of colonialism and race, it is necessary to move beyond facticity and fixity into "the practices of trans-coding and re-signing . . . to disturb, unsettle, and to re-inscribe." (5)

The anthropologist Michael Taussig has written about indigenous rituals that produce a "healing through images," a collective transformation of terror into historical memory. For Taussig, the image holds possibilities beyond itself—it is a form of ritual in and of itself, a site for performativity rather than fixed meaning or a stunted facticity. However, the image is not bound by solipsism and individualism but is instead collective and nomadic, creating social networks that sustain resistance to the silencing state terror produces. (6)

Reeves's body of work stages this healing, where processed and digitized video images partake in this trans-coding that media technologies and war suppress. This reinscription attempts to release pain and move toward a new collective reclamation of memory and history with imagery as a magical conduit to the psychic and political realms, not as an identical index and referent for these realms. In other words, the images shed their facticity and fixity, functioning more as hypertextual links to larger, more layered narratives that generate meaning production through juxtaposition. Psychiatrist Robert Jay Lifton has described how trauma requires that repetition be disengaged; he writes "The insight begins with the shattering of prior forms. Because forms have to be shattered for there to be new insight. In that sense, it is a shattering of form but it is also a new dimension of experience." (7)

This shattering of images and forms is exemplified in the design structure of *Obsessive Becoming*, -- a tour de force epic invoking the tropes of melodrama that connects Reeves's family dysfunctionality with the history of the representation of war and technology in twentieth-century modernity. This single-channel video moves from repressed memories of family violence and sexual abuse, to the need to witness larger political events like the Vietnam War and genocide, eventually arriving at a spiritual renewal and reconnection between family and collective politics. It doubles the sites of trauma: it moves both into psychic space and out to war and genocide by means of digital layering, superimpositions and dissolves. In *Obsessive Becoming*, a multitude of discordant images taken from home movies, archival footage of war, family snapshots and science films are digitized and morphed, condensing fragmented images into water and fluidity. The layering of these disparate images and their manipulation, releases them from their symptomatic repetition and indexicality. This layering strategy simultaneously problematizes the sign as fixed referent and re-sites personal/historical imagery as mobile formations.

As a body of work, Reeves's single-channel videos push the possibilities of camera-vision to unfold transcendence by both seeing anew and re-visioning again, often in slow-motion images, layering of images, or associative montage connected through dissolves that function almost like metaphorical bandages to the traumas within war-torn psychic states. *Sombra a Sombra*, a poetic evocation of the Spanish Civil through the poetry of Cesar Vallejo (read by video artist Juan Downey), consists of live action imagery of various ruins and sites in Spain, where the emptiness of the compositions, devoid of humans, suggests death as an absence, as a void diagrammed by graphic compositional elements.

The act of shooting functions as an exorcism of personal trauma that settles into spiritual resolution by transferring the Zen Buddhist notion of the present moment to the production process, an action that counters postmodernism's severance of the sign from the referent to create new meaning. Reeves's work forages for signification itself, an archaeology of the visual as a space where trauma is scripted into memory. (8)

For Reeves, the production of new referents as well as new signs drives the single-channel work—it refuses to accept imagery disconnected from the realms of the real. In Reeves's work, images and the imaginary function as processes through rather than as memorialized nostalgia. (9) Rejecting the veracity and verisimilitude of the image as essentially a conservative practice that reflects repetition, the images in Reeves's work operate as multi-layered dialogic exchanges with other images, each enfolding a testimony of the visual trace into the other. His is a virtuoso manipulation of a wide range of technologies (video, film, computers, analog and digital editing, original and archival footage, installation and photography, single-channel and multiple channel) to shred, layer and decompose images ranging from archival war images, to excavate the psychic traumas entangled within their formal designs. (10) For example, nearly every one of Reeves's single-channel pieces discards the straight cut—a hallmark of discontinuous montage—opting for image processing, dissolves, digital layering or superimpositions. These strategies imply that images are sedimentary layers of a geology of the self that is composed of public life, histories, subjectivities, traumas, recovered and repressed virtual/psychic imagery.

This shredding and image-composting is evidenced in Reeves's late 1970s image-processing techniques, his incessant use of dissolves, rotoscoping, his digitized composite imaging and digital morphing. In its deployment of technology to refashion vision as a way to repeal its mimetic realist function, Reeves's work extends the epistemology of the radical political modernists of the early twentieth century like Dziga Vertov, who positioned technology as a facilitator of a new vision. Vertov's concepts of the kino-eye and montage would dislodge the passivity of the fiction film, "the opiate of the people," through the construction of new intervals and gaps between the image-writing that would push the spectator to labor on the signification of new revolutionary meanings. (11)

Additionally, Reeves's single-channel work often utilizes either poetry or poetic narration as yet another layer of memory complementing the video images, restoring imagination to the image. Combined, the layered imagery and the poetic writing invert the relationship between text and image: images detonate denotations, while spoken texts suggests textuality as infinitely associative and deferred. For example, *Ganapati/A Spirit in the Bush*, a tape that situates the killing of elephants within a cultural death drive to destroy the earth, is composed of

continuously scrolling script that dislodges the slowed down images of elephants from their animality, linking them into a larger psychic symbolic structure about death, destruction and land. In these works, Reeves fashions a writing through images densely layering imagery and language to create new ways of thinking and perceiving. (12) These videos demonstrate that both text and image serve as discursive relations, infinitely sedimentary, equally visual, equally mystical, always evocative. (13)

They exhibit a tension between the production of the text reverting to the mysticism of individual vision, a nineteenth-century cultural/historical trope situating the artist in a privileged outsider position often marked by a retreat from public accountability, while the text's meaning production and reception extends out to a more spiritual collectivity based on an ephemeral affinity between images and the imaginary. This strategy relies on an individual vision to situate the pro-filmic, the world out there, as a laboratory where trauma can infuse the real with death; it occupies a countermovement to much of contemporary political film and video practice that is more explicitly and deliberately situated within more overtly political realms of identity politics or political struggles over difference that in turn situate themselves as acts of resistance to a normalizing hegemony. In Reeves's video work, resistance is not so reductively a rejection of hegemony but is instead a resistance to traumatic repetition that, despite technological exorcisms, continually repeats and encircles itself. His work continually pulls away from the real, positioning itself within a series of inscriptions, ciphers, repressions, displacements and condensations. (14)

This non-linear structure anticipates digital multi-media architectures that rely less on linear distribution of content and more on the multiple routes and paths to navigate the content as a subject comprised of many multiplicities. (15) Images, then, do not represent anything at all, but instead function as fluid parts of an image ecosystem comprised of many layers of social, historical, political, environmental and aesthetic parts that are constantly shifting and mutating. The act of representation then is transmogrified into multiple acts of juxtaposition. This layering then functions as a translation of trauma into images, and images into architectures and geologies. (16)

However, Reeves's reenactment and consequent reenchantment of this mobility between the private and the political, between memory and history, between the produced image and the archival one, precipitated pointed debate from audiences at the Flaherty Seminar in 1995 and 1997 and at Cornell Cinema last fall when *Obsessive Becoming* was screened with the artist. These discussions interrogated the politics of appropriating heavily encoded and overdetermined archival images from the Holocaust, the Warsaw ghetto during World War II, Vietnam or the Gulf War that graph a public archive of genocide and annihilation for more solipsistic, personal concerns like abuse, war trauma or the quest for spiritual enlightenment. In effect this process reduces historical contexts into iconographic condensations standing in for and encapsulating individualized psychic trauma. Invoking cultural feminist Susan Griffin, Reeves contends that these images are all interconnected—war, a public manifestation of unbridled male power, and family abuse, an example of war invading familial psychic terrains.

The voice-over first-person narration that recounts Reeves's abuse by and ruminations on his family invoke and rework cinematic melodramatic codes. Here, contradictions between the

family and public life are figured in excess, beyond language and rationality, situated more in excessive mise-en-scene and gesture than in a more overt and politically conscious set of dialectical denotations. Melodrama collapses family life and economic life as its central narrative mechanism. The visual practices of *Obsessive Becoming* materialize what media theorist Paul Virilio has described as the “virtualization of real space,” where space and time experience an alteration by means of cocooning, interface and interactivity. (17)

It is this virtualization, embodied in the computer-generated layering and image processing in *Obsessive Becoming*, that provokes debates about politics, precisely because virtualization dislocates politics and moves it to fabricated cyber/time/space. Perhaps the political debates erupting around these raided iconographies reside in the flattening affect/effect of the single-channel work rather than the rhizome-like webs of the Internet or CD-ROM that inscribe spectatorial “driving” as their operative modality, thus reforming the linear scopic drive of single-channel pieces into pluralities of readings, webs, destinations. One of the central problematics of digital culture, then, becomes locating these series of dislocations as fluid and ever-changing locations, meanings, readings, spatialities. Film theorist Raymond Bellour has noted the new interface of sound/image/discourse in image culture at the current moment:

We have gone beyond the image, to a nameless mixture, a discourse-image, if you like, or a sound image (“Son-Image,” as Jean-Luc Godard calls it), whose first side is occupied by television and second side by the computer, in our all-purpose machine society. This is clearly where we can observe all the potentialities anticipated by the computer image, over and above the image itself, since it is produced by the same machine which, better than any other, can combine and relate interplays with images and with language to any conceivable extent. (18)

Reeves argues that his work always emanates from personal experiences that are unresolved but eventually worked through in the process of imagemaking—a form of therapeutic intervention into the traumatic repetitions. His interlocutors retorted that these romanticized, spiritual tropes drain historical context and power relations from the images, depoliticizing them by anchoring them exclusively in the register of the personal rather than in a more feminist, post-colonial dialectical “to and fro” (to invoke Trinh T. Minh Ha) which unsettles both realms into a plurality of differences. (19)

Yet this debate about the political necessity of the archival images is also endemic to melodramatic cinematic conventions, often considered a radical form as it operates exactly on the contradictions between public and private, between family and larger social issues. This debate highlights another debate within art/media discourse between the romanticized individuality of the artist (identified with affective narratives that resonate with melodrama and are deeply etched with authorship) and with a destabilization of authorship and binary oppositions (offered by postmodernism and postcolonial theory that insist on a meta-analytical dialectic that unlocks texts to circulate within difference, frequently considered a more radical intervention). Reeves’s work is neither one nor the other, but in fact, a morph between both ends of the argument, and therefore, in itself destabilized because it circulates within and around genres rather than residing within a genre or theory in any fixed way.

“The Hand That Holds Up All This Falling,” an exhibition of four installations, some old and

some new, reverses the personally and individually encoded truth claims of the single-channel work. It exposes the more collective and global structures that literally, to conjure the title of the show, hold up the images. The installations jettison the troubling, analytically volatile and seductively beautiful personal romanticism of the single-channel pieces, exposing instead Reeves's artistic and intellectual preoccupations with the spatial and temporal architectures of images and with the production of what Jacques Derrida has labeled "archive fever," the compulsion to accumulate memory. For Derrida, the archive takes place "at the place of originary and structural breakdown of the said memory." (20) In the installations, this archive fever, much more than a repetition fetish to retain the past and recycle memory, elaborates Derrida's concepts that the archive instead consists of substrata and layers enveloped and superimposed on each other that speak a breakage from repetition.

Similarly, the installations move out from the individual craftsperson model of the videos into a more shamanistic collective model of production that performs a ritual of community animation: during the week-long set-up of the installations at Ithaca College, over 150 students, faculty (myself included), staff, community members and even deans contributed time and skills, doing everything from putting rocks around "Eingang: The Way In" (1990), painting gallery walls or writing on glass. Literally, many hands were involved, restoring community and handwork to the virtualized, prosthetic digital processes not as a replacement but as an enfolding between the analog and the digital. These installations work to reclaim public space as a fold between the private and public, analog and digital, image and object, real and virtual. As such, it is the enfolding process that assumes priority over the restitution of referential signs. (21)

The more public space of the gallery, where spectators walk literally around and into the works, inserting their own physicalities and subjectivities into the pieces, represents an embodiment of this unfolding. Combined with the sheer size of the installations mounted, the mobility foregrounds the more structural elements of Reeves's life project—to investigate the healing powers of images through inventions of continuous and discontinuous montage. The movement of the spectator's body simultaneously edits horizontal and vertical juxtapositions. These installations question how these very same images can be remade and retrieved for new archival relations and new substrata. Voice-overs, poetry and image making as personal exploration, endemic to the single-channel work, in these installations dissolve into a plurality of voices, inscriptions and encodings.

The show is comprised of four different pieces—"Eingang: The Way In," "Lines of Lamentation" (1997), "The White Television" (1977 and 1997), and a series of eight hand-painted digital composite images (1997)—that together demonstrate the range and complexity of Reeves's vision and span the 100-year trajectory of imagemaking from nineteenth-century lantern slides, to family film, to commercial imagery, to analog video images, to digital compositing and mutating.

"The White Television" reprised an installation that critiqued the Vietnam War by projecting slow-motion imagery of a performative, recreated war in *Smothering Dreams* shown on a TV monitor painted white. Reeves had initially created this piece while a cinema student at Ithaca College in the mid-1970s; this version of *The White Television* was primarily used to involve undergraduates in its production during master classes as part of his residency as the Inaugural

Skip Landen Professional in Residence at the Roy H. Park School of Communications in October of 1997.

“Eingang: The Way In,” perhaps Reeves’s most celebrated installation, originally premiered at the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, Georgia in 1990 and was subsequently remounted at several other venues, including Montage ‘93 in Rochester, New York; Harvard University in 1994; and sites in England, Scotland and Ireland. The title is derived from a Rainer Maria Rilke poem that suggests the ineffability and urgency of vision. The installation enacts a recycling process of technology, images and nature to create monumental public space for contemplation of the environment, broadly mapped as a constellation between nature, high technology and physical movement of the spectator around the space. In nearly every review, “Eingang” is described as a hauntingly spiritual work that searches for inexpressible connections between nature and technology.

“Eingang” consists of seven large tree trunks three feet in diameter, reclaimed from a 350-year-old fir that had been discarded in New Mexico. Their bark is peeling off, suggesting the process of decomposition and erosion as an artmaking process in and of itself. Each log is a different height ranging from 25 inches to 49 inches, creating a natural altar arising out of volcanic rocks and Scottish beach stones placed around the bottom. On top of each log are North Carolina egg rocks that spill over the video monitors mounted inside. At the Handwerker Gallery, the gallery walls were painted a burnt sienna brown, which served not only to darken the gallery space but to invoke earth, the ground, planting. A few key lights lit the trunks, suggesting moonlight, within what amounted to a darkened cave of contemplation and participation.

Seven high-definition television monitors are inserted into the trunks so that the screens are flush with the surface, functioning as a visual pun on the contradiction between nature and technology. Reeves’s three-channel video installation, “Try to Live to See This” (1988), a 90-minute triptych organized around themes of water, earth and fire and was shot over seven years in America, Europe, Africa and Asia and fed into the monitors. Spherical bowls filled with distilled water are precipitously poised on top of the flat monitors and reflect the images from the monitors in ghostly distorted patterns that further etherealize the images and dislocate them from their own materiality. Inside each bowl floats a small glass plate piled with rice. Miniature television monitors with three-inch screens lay on the rice, picking up random signals from commercial television broadcasts that contrasts with the more personal and more formally sophisticated images in the larger monitors of landscapes, animals and women workers from across the globe.

Although many critics have pointed to the oscillation between nature and technology, and to Reeves’s ingenious materialization of Zen principles of the interconnectedness of all things in “Eingang,” the installation is much more intellectually complex than a simple exercise in ecological spirituality. In its repetition of circular imagery in the shape of the trunks, the spherical bowls and the arrangement of the logs, “Eingang” refutes the passive immobilizations of cinematic spectatorship: this circularity is physically and psychically inscribed and doubled in the very act of spectatorship, since the piece cannot be fully seen or experienced without movement around it.

Although the darkened gallery space and the altar-like distribution of logs evoke the reposed

spatiality of religious architecture, the continual movement of changing images reflected in the spherical bowls, randomly accessed imagery, rocks landed on beaches by the force of wave motion, and spectators' bodily movements around the piece inscribe temporality. "Eingang" explores not only a contemplative mode, but also attempts to imagine what a transnational historiography of the senses might look like. The images depict every continent and the physical objects combine objects from Europe (the stones), America (the trees), and Asia (the monitors and high technology). Different historical periods together form strata: the ancient lava rocks, the 350-year-old fir trunks, water and images from the present, Reeves's own personal archive of images unfolding in the trunks. In this way, "Eingang," a post-1989, post-Cold War memorial to the end of arbitrary political and historical borders, functions almost as a sketchbook for the ideas of historical layers constantly moving within water flows that suffuse *Obsessive Becoming*.

The exhibition also includes eight large-scale digital paintings and prints that similarly explore the relationships between trauma, historiography, layering of substrates, and the iconography of water and flows. Reeves's two-dimensional work rejects the use of digitality as a kind of hyperrealist verisimilitude. In this work, Reeves deploys digital imaging techniques to question the ontology of the photographic image and to multiply and materialize its historical discursivity; the images expose the seams and folds between different registers of images. Four of the images are digitally processed video images from Reeves's own single-channel work, including a shot repossessed, as it were, from his new narrative feature film in progress, *Perdu*. Reeves in effect refutes the originality and authenticity of his own imagework in this show by underscoring how all images, once they are produced, enter the archive.

The four other images, which Reeves dubs *Color Digital Paintings*, constitute the strongest interventions of the two-dimensional work. They operate as investigations into the possibilities of digitality to pluralize the archive and to repack its discursive layers as sediments of power relations and political/psychic traumas. *Homage to the Lovers of Pompeii* (1997), a 2 x 2 feet Iris print comprised of over 40 digital layers, is structured like a target with a flower in the bull's eye. A rainbow, a man and a woman, words in German and French, mushrooms, a Chinese dancer, lips, penis and scrotum, a breast and flamingos populate the frame. A target is laid over this collage. The flawless combination of disparate imagery, evoking sexuality, animality and desire as they are dispersed within the context of the nation state, is sutured by elegant handwriting in French superimposed over the images. Thus, while the digital processes expedite a new form of analytical montage within one image rather than sequentially as articulated in montage's cinematic antecedents, the analog image of the writing illustrates how a hand and language hold it all together.

This juxtaposition between the analog and the digital is interrogated much more explicitly in another digital painting entitled *Gas Masque* (1997). A historical image of a mother and her two children wearing World War II-era gas masks is digitized, revealing a decomposition of colors and resolution. The image is composed within the visual codes of traditional photojournalism that renders victims as icons for larger geopolitical issues. Through analog handicraft, Reeves restores their historical context by surrounding the figures with gold handlettering that describes the pervasiveness of gas bombing in nearly every country and its illegality. He visually bears witness to the psychic traumas trapped within these icons by layering the images with densely applied oil sticks in brilliant, rich hues of red, blue, orange and green that are scratched in

intricately minute patterns directly onto the image. This process disturbs the completeness of the traditionally photographed image with scribbling that figuratively inscribes inner turmoil on the outside of the image, a kind of trauma-writing.

Manos Para La Muerte (1997), an extremely large digital painting, reworks a similar terrain of the terrors of war through imagery from the Spanish Civil War of crowds rushing off and leaders assuming power with their hands raised. Figures emerge from gray paint and are outlined in blue. Red, yellow and gray oil sticks, scratched in intricately chaotic interconnected patterns, viscerally illustrate the working through of war traumas and fascism as they are etched right onto bodies.

Perhaps the most stunning and enthralling part of the entire exhibition is “Lines of Lamentation,” a site-specific installation on the nearly 70 feet of glass walls of the Handwerker Gallery. Glued onto 20-foot-high, two-foot-wide windows, this work-in-progress looks at how multiple languages write themselves as images and looks toward layering as a strategy to question the primacy of any image’s referentiality.

This installation queries the act of translation and mediation, rendering them a continual process, always incomplete. “Lines of Lamentation” is also a study in the processes of signification as forms of stratification, a sedimentary act that requires an archaeology of images and languages in their endless difference that suggests Michel Foucault morphed with Derrida. Each panel is composed of six layers, the centerpiece of which is a line of seven nineteenth-century lantern slides glued to each window at eye level and illuminated by daylight from outside.

Across the top of all 14 panels, Reeves has composed a poetic, rambling text that is handwritten in gold script. The text is filled with wordplay, political allusions to corporate downsizing and governmental inadequacies and pseudo-narratives that never complete themselves about three angels: Aleph, Beth and Gimel. It was inspired by a three-hour speed writing session loosely connected to the random distribution of lantern slides. Words denoting the content of the slides are written beneath them. Under these descriptive words, which contrast to the free flowing poetic language of the top layer, three lines of 16mm sound mag film are taped to each window. The gallery provided a sound reader, with which the viewer could run the sound head across the mag to hear Reeves reading the top layer, illustrating the technological mediation involved in all acts of representation.

The bottom two layers of each panel consist of handwritten translations of Reeves’s narrative into over 20 different languages including French, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, Farsi, Arabic, Finnish and Hindi. This multiplicity of languages deterritorializes and denationalizes images and creates a new social imaginary based on plurality, non-linearity and imaginative leaps propelled by imagery but not bonded to it.

The first panel reads:

Aleph, Beth and Gimel: We lived under lindens at the axle of this world. Our song was eaten by the great white father. Tearing pelvis from the Phoenix, he made work and set us to it. The white birch buds headed in while alphabets and inventions ate the leaves from the trees.

The lantern slides show successive images of a birch tree, lettering, willow trees, washing, a skull, a tree and buds. In “Lines of Lamentation,” Reeves explores the “natural” image processing of deterioration as the mark of history upon the text; the lantern slides are rusted, bent, dirty, crackled and the images themselves have been burned, wiped out, their emulsions ruined by water, light and air. Each slide is numbered and described on the edge, a classification system that depends on the referent and on atomizing images out of context. This historical writing on the image text is doubled again in the act of writing on the window itself. The piece revels in the differences between the various images and the script of the writers, whose words transform into decorative abstract art forms.

All the parts of “The Hand that Holds Up All This Falling” trace how Reeves deploys fluid iconography—whether in digital imagemaking, writing across separated panels, or embodied in the physical form of water itself—to attempt to heal fractured, fragmented traumatized imagery by remaking borders to restore a magical aura. But even more significantly, this show functions as a visual mapping of archive fever, a physical elaboration of the substrata of history that is simultaneously writing and imagery, psychic imaginaries and the mutability of the real, the performance of the present and the shifting destabilizations of the past, the handwork of the analog and the rhizome work of the digital.

Derrida insists that “what is no longer archived in the same way is no longer lived in the same way.” (22) “The Hand That Holds Up All This Falling” similarly intimates that the production of the future requires animating the past with life, hope, heart and hand, rather than with the death drive. As Reeves writes in the last panel of “Lines of Lamentation”: “We gather at the shore, exchange greetings, clothes, gender and launch homeward in the shadows of fallen temples, in the joy of resurrection at Arlington to the palm of the Diamond Cutter.”

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NOTES

1. For penetrating discussions of these films as well as a particularly incisive interview with Daniel Reeves, see Marita Sturken, “What is Grace in All this Madness: The Videotapes of Daniel Reeves,” *Afterimage* 13, nos. 1&2 (Summer 1985), pp. 24-27.
2. For their provocative insights into the work of Daniel Reeves, I want to acknowledge heady and heated discussions with Timothy Murray, Zillah Eisenstein, Ruth Bradley, Scott MacDonald, Erika Muhammad, Michelle Materre and Tom Somma. It is hard to know where their ideas end and mine begin in this essay, so I thank them for their generosity in allowing me to pirate their ideas and morph them into my own.
3. See Cathy Caruth, ed., *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), pp. 151-154.
4. Ibid, pp. 4-5.
5. Stuart Hall, “The After-life of Frantz Fanon: Why Fanon? Why Now? Why Black Skin, White Masks” in Alan Reed, ed., *The Fact of Blackness: Frantz Fanon and Visual Representation*, (London: Institute of Contemporary Arts, 1996), p. 19.

6. Michael Taussig, *The Nervous System*, (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 6-30. For a trenchant discussion of trauma as it interweaves state terrors on the level of performance, see also Timothy Murray, *Drama/Trauma: Specters of Race and Sexuality in Performance, Video and Art*, (London: Routledge, 1997).
7. Cathy Caruth, "An interview with Robert Jay Lifton," in *Trauma: Exploration of Memory*, p. 134.
8. Slavoj Žižek refers to this process in *The Plague of Fantasies*: "In order to be operative, fantasy has to remain 'implicit', it has to maintain a distance towards the explicit symbolic texture sustained by it, and to function as its inherent transgression. The constitutive gap between explicit symbolic texture and its phantasmic background is obvious in any work of art." Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies*, (New York: Verso, 1997), p. 18.
9. Shoshana Feldman and Dori Laub, M.D., *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*, (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 91.
10. Interview with Daniel Reeves, October 12, 1997, Ithaca, New York, conducted by Timothy Murray and Patricia R. Zimmermann.
11. See for example, "Dziga Vertov on Kino-eye: Excerpts from a Lecture Given in Paris in 1929," *FilmFront* Vol. 1, no. 2 (January 1935), pp. 6-8. For a comprehensive sense of Vertov's writings, see Annette Michelson, ed., *The Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).
12. For an illuminating historical and theoretical discussion of the 1960s avant-garde, see David James, *Allegories of Cinema: American Film in the 1960s*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).
13. For a discussion of the feminist avant-garde's visual and political strategies to reconstitute private/public spaces, see Patricia Mellencamp, *A Fine Romance: Five Ages of Film Feminism*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), especially pp. 155-290.
14. Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), p. 15. For a lucid elaboration of documentary's continual incorporation of realist codes, see Brian Winston, *Claiming the Real*, (London: British Film Institute, 1995).
15. David Tomas, "From the Photograph to Postphotographic Practice: Toward a Postoptical Ecology of the Eye," in Timothy Druckrey, ed., *Electronic Culture: Technology and Visual Representation*, (New York: Aperture Press, 1996), pp. 145-153.
16. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Explanation and Culture: Marginalia," in Russell Ferguson, Martha Gever, Trinh T. Minh-Ha, and Cornel West, *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Culture*, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1990), pp. 377-393.
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20. Derrida, p. 11.
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